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They Kept The Money

The late Sen. Robert A. Taft was one of the first to recognize and be alarmed by the focus of C.I.A. money and energy on domestic opinion and attitudes. And he made it clear to his colleagues that if his candidacy for the presidency proved successful he intended to stop the C.I.A.'s meddling in domestic politics, communications and the academic community.

After Eisenhower won the nomination, Senator Taft met with the candidate in the famous Morningside Heights conference. One of the commitments which the Senator thought he brought away from that meeting was that Eisenhower, if elected, would appoint two men that Taft had decided upon, one to the job of State Department security officer, and the other as director of the C.I.A. The appointments were not made, and Senator Taft is known to have been particularly aggrieved by reports that the President's brother, Milton Eisenhower, had vetoed the appointments.

In any event, Eisenhower, like Truman before him, left operational guidance and review of C.I.A. activities to the Department of State. That was the era of the Dulles brothers, and the golden age for the C.I.A. politicians. John Foster Dulles, secretary of state, abhorred administrative detail. And he divested himself of such responsibility, leaving direction of the C.I.A. to the Policy Planning Staff and various departmental deskheads.

When Admiral Raborn began to cut off the C.I.A.'s fat-salary largesse to the academicians, the liberals and the intellectuals on the domestic scene, these well-paid patriots retaliated by condemning the C.I.A. in print at every opportunity. When stricken from the payroll, where most of them had been secretly paid or supported under pseudonyms and financed through tax-exempt foundations, their favorite charge was that the C.I.A. had subverted, contaminated and exploited them by giving them money.